

Bill Bjork

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February 3, 2010

Dear Mr. Smolinski,

I don't normally do this, but felt compelled to write to you about the proposed Woodland Road project" through Champion, Ely and Michigamme townships. I'm a property owner in Champion Township. My family has owned property in this area since 1947, used it for hunting and outdoor recreation. We are very familiar with the country the proposed road will traverse and am very concerned about the damage to native trout streams as well as the invasion of equipment and personnel's affect on the land and its wildlife.

This area, especially around Silver Lake and the Upper Dead River are beautiful. The country rugged and wild. Most area's can only be reached on foot or by ATV trails. It is pristine, beautiful and practically unchanged from early days. I've hunted and fished this area for over sixty years and think it would be a sin to open it up to truck traffic, bridges, culverts and more access than the natural area can stand.

We, as a people, need natural areas like this, not just for us old timers, but for future generations. Our children and grandchildren are using it for camping, hunting and fishing, just as we did as kids. The area is no less beautiful than the Porcupine Mountains to the west or the McCormick Tract so close by. A road and public access would simply ruin it for the future.

I know, most discussions these days are generated by the "almighty dollar", but this requires more thought. Let's make a common sense decision and route the truck traffic to Humbolt by taking the Triple AAA road west to the existing Peshekee River grade and use this road around to Champion and Humbolt. It's longer, I realize, but already exists, avoids prime virgin habitat, and is the right thing to do.

I was born in Ishpeming, love this country and can't stand to think it will be destroyed simply to make money for a company that has no history here. John Voelker (Robert Traver) would be turning in his grave if he knew the country near Silver Lake was to be violated. We drove by John's home, near Deer Lake, every time we went to our camp on Silver Creek. My dad knew John, we even visited his camp near Silver Lake as I did research for my book "the Camps U.P. North," I tried to capture the history of many camps in the U.P. during the early 20th century. This is sacred ground and should never be violated by traffic, or trespassed upon simply for corporation greed.

Please use the existing road system from the Triple A to the Peshekee river grade road and avoid the damage the Wilderness Road would create for the sake of present and future generations.

Thank you,

Bill Bjork